

Victorian Skills Pledge

Recognising the commitment of your business to skills development

Better training builds better business

Changes to the Victorian vocational education and training system encourage staff up-skilling.

For Abigroup Contractors Pty Ltd, a company that has created its own Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to meet its skills training needs, taking the *Victorian Skills Pledge* made good sense. “The Abigroup core values – Accountability, High Performance, Integrity, Teamwork, Respect and Lifestyle flexibility for work/life balance – are firmly aligned to the *Victorian Skills Pledge*,” says Fred Baltetsch, Abigroup’s National RTO Manager.

Part of the Victorian Government’s major package of reforms to the Victorian training system, the *Victorian Skills Pledge* is a public declaration by businesses of their commitment to skills development. Taking the *Victorian Skills Pledge* gives businesses a range of marketing opportunities to show potential customers they are dedicated to up-skilling their staff to best-practice standards. It is open to businesses of all sizes in all industries.

Baltetsch says staff training not only accords with Abigroup’s core values, but is essential in winning major projects across the diverse sectors in which the company operates.

One of Australia’s largest contractors of infrastructure and construction projects across the engineering, building, water, mining services and telecommunications industries, Abigroup is currently delivering training for Certificate III Civil Construction (Road Construction & Maintenance) and Certificate III Civil Construction (Plant Operations), as well as High Risk training, including Cranes and Dogging. Abigroup’s



Learning and Development Team delivers both accredited and non-accredited training in-house and manages outsourcing to other training providers as required for individual and project-specific training.

Thanks to its in-house RTO, Abigroup can now deliver over 90% of its training in the workplace. “And if all of our trainees or apprentices are suddenly needed for a big concrete pour, I’ve got the flexibility to reschedule their training to accommodate,” Baltetsch says.

A former TAFE Head of School and National Coordinator of plumber training, Baltetsch was engaged six months ago to head Abigroup’s RTO. He has just completed its audit to meet Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 standards, resulting in a number of improvement strategies. One such improvement is maximising recognition of staff’s prior skills to encourage advancement of qualifications, thereby helping them map career pathways.



Securing jobs for your future

Baltetsch says there has been great enthusiasm and support for the scheme at every level, and this is evidenced through the significant investment made in the training. "There has been wonderful support from everyone in the Southern Region Head Office (Victoria) and in the National Office up to and including the Managing Director," Baltetsch says. "Training is recognised as a means to gaining a competitive edge."

The *Victorian Training Guarantee* means that the significant cost of staff training is more likely to be subsidised in future. It entitles eligible students to government subsidised training through a TAFE institute, university TAFE Division, Adult Community Education organisation, or private Registered Training Organisation (RTO). If a business is looking to up-skill its employees through any of these approved providers a government subsidy will be available to help them meet the cost of their training.

The *Victorian Training Guarantee* provides an opportunity for businesses to share the cost of training with Government for training for the skills they need to raise productivity and innovation. It is also designed to boost the skills and capabilities of their workforce.

While Abigroup is of a size to develop its own skills training strategies, smaller businesses that sign the *Victorian Skills Pledge* are eligible for

Skills for Growth: the Workforce Development Program. This program provides eligible businesses with independent specialists to work with them – free of charge – to identify their strategic business aims and objectives, assess staff skills, and place staff into accredited training. To be eligible, a business must employ between one and 200 full-time equivalent staff, have been in operation for at least 12 months and be financially viable.

Meanwhile, for Abigroup, Baltetsch is keen to develop new training systems, such as e-learning, to make workplace training even more flexible and more attuned to the modern learner. It is exactly this innovation and market leadership that makes Abigroup an ideal signatory for the *Victorian Skills Pledge*.

“ Training is recognised as a means to gaining a competitive edge ”

For more information about changes to the TAFE and training system, including *Skills for Growth*, the *Victorian Training Guarantee* and the *Victorian Skills Pledge*, visit www.skills.vic.gov.au

Industry Training Advisory Body

Building Industry Consultative Council Industry Advisory Body
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Securing Jobs for Your Future – Skills Victoria

The *Victorian Skills Pledge* is a key initiative under the Government's *Securing Jobs for Your Future – Skills for Victoria* policy, the most far-reaching reform of the skills system in Victoria's history. For more information visit www.skills.vic.gov.au